



Greg Nickels, Mayor

Community Meeting

Volunteer Park

Vegetation Management Plan

Thursday
Oct. 16
7- 8:30 p.m.

Stevens School,
Second Floor Library
1242 18th Ave. E

For more information
or to make comments,
Seattle Parks and Recreation
Urban Forester

Eliza Davidson
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Seattle Parks and Recreation's Urban Forestry program is developing a Vegetation Management Plan (VMP) for Volunteer Park during Fall 2003. This plan will address Volunteer Park vegetation and directly-related topics only.

The VMP's primary objectives are:

1. to evaluate existing park trees for maintenance needs and future planting opportunities
2. to provide management guidance for the Olmsted-designed landscape after 100 years of vegetation growth

At the upcoming public meeting Parks staff will:

1. summarize Volunteer Park's landscape legacy and current vegetation condition
2. describe typical VMP elements
3. outline specific topics the VMP seeks to address

The meeting will include opportunities to share information and ideas about vegetation management in the park. A second community meeting in November 2003 will focus in greater detail on existing vegetation condition and proposed management recommendations for this vegetation.

Identified Issues:

1. Tree management -- hazards, disease and decline, over-crowding, loss of views
2. Invasive plant control -- un-maintained peripheries
3. Preserving essential Olmsted design character -- original surviving plants and lay out
4. Contemporary user pressures -- trampling, dogs, illegal activities, tree donations

Community Meeting #2

Volunteer Park Vegetation Management Plan

Wednesday
Nov. 19
7- 8:30 p.m.

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At the upcoming (second) community meeting, Parks Urban Forestry staff will introduce key elements of the draft Vegetation Management Plan:

1. findings on current condition of Volunteer Park's vegetation and historic landscape legacy
2. summary of contemporary uses and issues affecting park vegetation
3. plan goals, vegetation management recommendations and implementation priorities and strategies
4. opportunities for volunteer stewardship support

The draft *Volunteer Park Vegetation Management Plan* will be published in late November 2003.

Copies will be available for public review for a three-week period at local libraries, community centers and on line at <http://www.cityofseattle.net/parks/Horticulture/vmp.htm>

Written and email comments will be received by the Urban Forester.

VOLUNTEER PARK VMP: Citizen Comments, PIP meeting – October 16, 2003

Dick Blount – Capitol Hill Lions: It will be good to have future tree planting opportunities in the park, to partner with the City again.

Duane Spofford – Wading pool used to be cemetery area. Lack of irrigation at NE corner of park by wading pool – capped off 5 years ago, ran up to road.

Pat Ragen – Federal Ave neighbor: Does Parks have the capacity to do treework needed in the park? What's the current status?

The Department has increased its capacity to do treework in the recent past, through the addition of a ProParks-funded tree crew and added capital funding for hazard tree removal and replacement. Backlogs still exist but improvements definitely have been made, and continue.

Mary Ragen – Federal Ave neighbor: Tennis court area really needs scrub cleaned out, very overgrown. Loves new flowers by Burke Monument.

Kelly ____ - Friends of Seattle's Olmsted Parks: How will a replacement plant list be developed?

Baseline will be Olmsted plant list for the park, deleting problematic species and adding others in keeping with original to maximum extent possible. Modern taxa and varieties may provide additional options, honoring character but reducing maintenance demand (pruning, insect and disease control, eliminating invasives).

Kathleen Notley – Park neighbor: Runs in Volunteer Park and gets peace there, loves the place. Avid gardener, eager to learn more about trees. Welcomes opportunity to be a volunteer gardener, happy to start asap and thinks many others would enjoy helping in this way. She considers it a real privilege.

Nancy Cifuentes – interested citizen: Senescent shrubs, working to renovate as time allows (as part of her job as park gardener). Has observed night-time use of shrubberies in summer and extent is shocking. Developed individual volunteer program at Zoo where volunteers helped do landscape projects on a drop-in, set day-of-week basis. Extremely successful and not too demanding on her time, welcomes such help at Volunteer Park any time (if idea's ok with supervisors). Hopeful that VMP will help leadership advocate more strongly for Volunteer Park's many unmet needs and lead to positive change. Feels park might benefit from being placed back under Hort management. Cactus garden is proposed for edge of comfort station, east of Conservatory beds; may happen soon - volunteer initiative. Slope beds just east of lily ponds will need renovation soon.

Doug Bayley – park neighbor: Excited about this plan and potential to galvanize community support, both volunteers and funding to support much-needed improvements and landscape restoration work. When curator of Dunn Gardens, also ran successful volunteer program and sees potential for Volunteer Park to use this model. Glad to be involved in VMP development, loves & frequents the park, has much of his life.

VOLUNTEER PARK VMP: Citizen Comments, PIP meeting – November 19, 2003

VMP Implementation ideas:

Small, regularly-scheduled projects would work well in Volunteer Park. This approach has been very successful at the Japanese Garden, with weekly volunteer gardening on weekdays with garden staff directing work.

Monthly events also could be organized, like Friends of GAR, etc. Would potentially complement above, and attract people who couldn't make it weekdays.

There's still plenty of room for large volunteer events for special days like Day of Caring and Earth Day, especially dealing with invasives along peripheries.

VMP should clearly identify "donation projects" in which tree planting is coupled with a complete restoration scheme. Since ornamental trees are especially struggling, aging and down in numbers in the park, it makes sense to deal with overgrown shrubbery & invasives to make room to reintroduce this layer of canopy. This packaging also is desirable from a marketing & volunteer-organizing standpoint.

To attract people you really need a hook, like sex and drugs. Volunteer Park has both so maybe they can rally volunteers.

Vegetation-related ideas:

Avoid planting tree species that become brittle at maturity.

Turf behind SAAM needs to be roped off and renovated. Still seems in rough shape since dog run closure. *District crew chief noted that some turf renovation was done immediately after closure but agreed more is needed.*

What type of grass exactly will VMP specify? *VMP will reference Parks Best Management Practices regarding turf seeding and care; specifications for seed change as new varieties are developed and tested, and BMP's are periodically updated to reflect latest findings, to insure best quality and lowest input of pesticides, water & fertilizers possible.*

Lavender is a great plant to use in the park – should incorporate more.

How can the VMP increase park bird populations? Very few observed/heard now except crows. *Staff notes link exists between multi-layered vegetation, native species diversity and increased wildlife habitat. This is not primarily a natural habitat-oriented park but can increase those qualities to a degree.*

Add natives to neglected buffers of park as part of restoration – get rid of holly, laurel & boxwood and use mahonia, evergreen huckleberry, pacific wax myrtle, also maybe deciduous natives. This would increase wildlife while cleaning up seriously let-go areas.

Draft VMP review (add citizen comments to final document)